LETTERS@METRO.US

ELTON JOHN VS. MADONNA? {page 08}

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BOSTON
Tuesday, August 7, 2012

GETTY IMAGES

Raisman's last stand

With her local legend growing by the day, Needham's Aly Raisman has one final chance to grab individual gold today ◗ A look at the one-and-done nature of women's gymnastics ◗ Highly unlikely that Raisman will compete in the 2016 games in Rio {page 18}

News

Bulger's lawyer says 'Whitey' will testify

◗ Will give up the DOJ official he says gave him immunity {page 02}

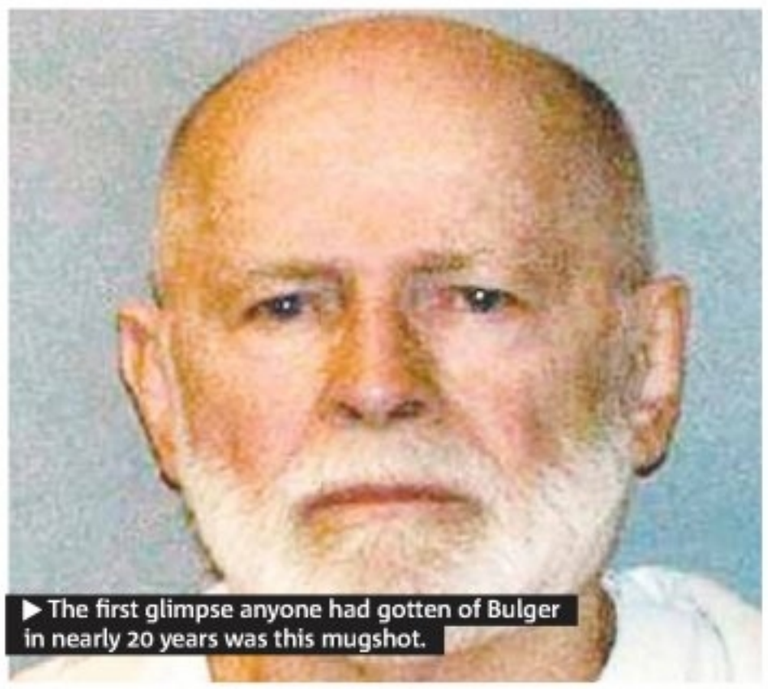
Books

How to beat the crimson blues

◗ New novel about Harvard is a smart and funny read {page 11}

Lawyer: Whitey Bulger will testify

Alleged mob boss's lawyer says his client is being unfairly criticized ◗ Whitey will testify at his trial set for March, attorney says ◗ Nothing will be off-limits


▶ The first glimpse anyone had gotten of Bulger in nearly 20 years was this mugshot.

It's been almost 20 years since anyone in Boston has heard from alleged fugitive mob boss James "Whitey" Bulger.

But that streak, like his 16 years on the run, appears as if it will come to an end.

Bulger, 82, will testify at his trial next March, his lawyer said during a court hearing yesterday.

"He wants the opportunity to speak the truth to everyone about why for 30 years he was allowed to allegedly commit crimes," his attorney, J. W. Carney Jr., said. "He is in the best position possible to talk about how the federal government has acted."

Carney said earlier this year that he planned to file a motion to dismiss federal murder charges because Bulger was promised immunity for working as an informant.

Carney also revealed yesterday that Bulger claims he was not offered immunity from a member of the FBI, but from a "representative of the Department of Justice."

"You will hear James Bulger testify."
J.W. CARNEY, JR., BULGER'S ATTORNEY

Bulger's case

- The 82-year-old is facing federal charges for his involvement in 19 murders as the former head of the Winter Hill Gang.
- Bulger fled Boston in late 1994 after he was tipped off by a corrupt FBI agent that he was about to be indicted.
- He was finally caught last year in Santa Monica, Calif.
- Bulger is set to go to trial in March.

The government has rejected the allegation that Bulger was given immunity.

During a status hearing yesterday, Carney said he would not file the motion and instead bring the issue to trial.

Bulger feels he has a better chance of proving he was promised immunity before a jury at trial rather than before a single judge who would decide the motion, Carney said.

Carney also said he wouldn't file the motion to dismiss because he hasn't had adequate time to review all the discovery evidence and would not be able to file a "substantive" motion in time.

Having a defendant testify is oftentimes viewed as an unusual and controversial move, like when former Boston city councilor Chuck Turner took the stand during his corruption trial. He was later found guilty.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
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Families react

The surprise announcement by Bulger's lawyer that the alleged mob boss planned to testify came as good news for some relatives of his alleged victims.

"I think that it's good," said Patricia Donahue, whose husband was killed in 1982. "I'd like to hear what he has to say. There's a lot of unanswered questions."

Others were skeptical that they would ever see the day.

When asked by reporters what he thought about Bulger going to testify at trial, Steve Davis, whose sister Debra was allegedly killed in 1998, said, "if he makes it to trial."

In the news

$.03

The price of a gallon of gas in Massachusetts has jumped three cents in the past week.

AAA Southern New England reported yesterday that self-serve, regular gasoline is now selling for an average of $3.58 per gallon.

While local prices have risen 20 cents over the past month, the price in Massachusetts is still three cents below the national average, and 15 cents lower than it was this time last year.

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Today's local tweet

"I turned on #Boston TV news & saw men hugging & kissing in public, I thought sheesh, not another chick-fil-a protest. Nope, just a #NASA PDA"

@PICTUREBOSTON ON THE COMMAND CENTER'S EXCITEMENT OVER THE CURIOSITY ROVER LANDING ON MARS

News in brief

Environmentalists to talk climate change in Boston

BOSTON. Clean energy advocates plan to call out Republicans and presidential candidate Mitt Romney today outside the New England Aquarium for allegedly denying the science of climate change and blocking solutions.

Rep. Edward Markey, a backer of clean energy, plans to join officials from the University of Massachusetts, the fishing industry and the New England Aquarium to demand that Republicans stop opposition to climate solutions, including an extension of a wind energy tax credit.

Markey attributes historically low lobster prices to an oversupply due in part to warming waters. He also says that climate change has contributed to sea levels off New England rising at three to four times the global average over the past 50 years.

The event is set to start at 1:30 p.m. at Boston's Central Wharf, outside the Aquarium.

SHNS/METRO

Late-night drivers be warned

MASSACHUSETTS. Until the end of September, there will be 11 extra State Police patrols on Routes 24 and 195 on weekends.

This past weekend was the second week of the surge, which has resulted in a number of arrests and citations, according to police.

▶ Obey the rules of the road on routes 24 and 195.

Troopers wrote 262 motor vehicle citations and made 10 drunken driving arrests during this weekend's operation.

Among those arrested were a drunken driver who was going the wrong way on Route 195 in Fairhaven, a driver who struck a cruiser on a detail on Route 195 in Fall River, and a driver who struck another car on Route 24 and tried to flee.

The totals racked up for both weekends combined by the extra patrols were 19 OUI arrests and 484 motor vehicle citations.

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Bad tow in Quincy leads to gun charge

QUINCY. A 42-year-old Quincy man was charged with assault after he allegedly threatened a tow truck driver with a gun.

The tow truck driver mistakenly towed Brian Carroll's car from his apartment complex Sunday night, according to the Patriot Ledger.

When the company returned the car, Carroll allegedly pointed a gun at the driver and threatened him, police said.

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ACLU calls mural comments 'ugly'

COURTNEY SACCO/METRO

▶ "The Giant of Boston" was created last week by twin Brazilian artists known as Os Gemeos.

As hundreds of bigoted comments continued to accrue yesterday over a new public mural in Dewey Square, the ACLU weighed in, calling the remarks ugly.

Over the past three days, two posts on Boston's Fox 25 Facebook page have generated 700 comments from people debating whether the 70-foot-by-70-foot character depicts a Muslim person in a hijab, with many posts calling the figure a "towel head," and a terrorist.

"The ACLU supports exercising freedom of expression, and that's what the artists Os Gemeos have done by getting a permit to create a mural depicting what the curator says is a little boy in pajamas with a shirt on his head," ACLU of Massachusetts Executive Director Carol Rose said yesterday.

"As art often does, the mural has provoked a range of emotions, including some ugly racist postings on a Boston Fox 25 Facebook page by people who seem to equate all head coverings with terrorism."

Quoted

"As art often does, the mural has provoked a range of emotions, including some ugly racist postings on a Boston Fox 25 Facebook page by people who seem to equate all head coverings with terrorism."

CAROL ROSE, ACLU

After posting the question "What does the Greenway mural look like to you?" for the second time in three days yesterday, Fox 25 followers wrote 152 comments, many of which bashed Islam.

"Islam is not a race, it is a dangerous religious idea to both believers and infidels alike, that is perpetuated by men and women of all colors and nationalities," said Facebook user Shawn Clark.

Commenter Sean Grealey wrote, "Oh you terrorists loving people, give me a break, this pics is s terrorist, prop related to Obama somehow."

"Such racist reactions, while themselves protected speech, are nonetheless troubling, particularly after the shooting yesterday at a Sikh temple in Milwaukee, in which someone may have passed judgment on others based simply on who they are or how they dress," Rose said.

The feedback was no different than what the media outlet had gotten over the weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, Fox posted a photo of the mural, which its creators, Gustavo and Otavio Pandolfo, named "The Giant of Boston." That post garnered roughly 600 comments, and was still posted last night.

Some commentators criticized Fox for posting a photo that was obstructed by cranes, with a crane positioned close to the character's hand, leading some to believe it looked like a gun. Scott Dowling told another person to "use your eyes."

"That 'gun' you are seeing isn't even part of the mural. It's a crane. So, clearly, you are ignorant. Why? Because you chose to lash out and judge before learning all of the facts. Shame on you, shame on Boston, and shame on Fox 25."

Facebook user Brian Christopher Glaser also took offense to yesterday's post, saying "Recycling your fabricated controversy from Saturday. That's what it looks like to me."

Mayor Thomas Menino did not return calls for comment.

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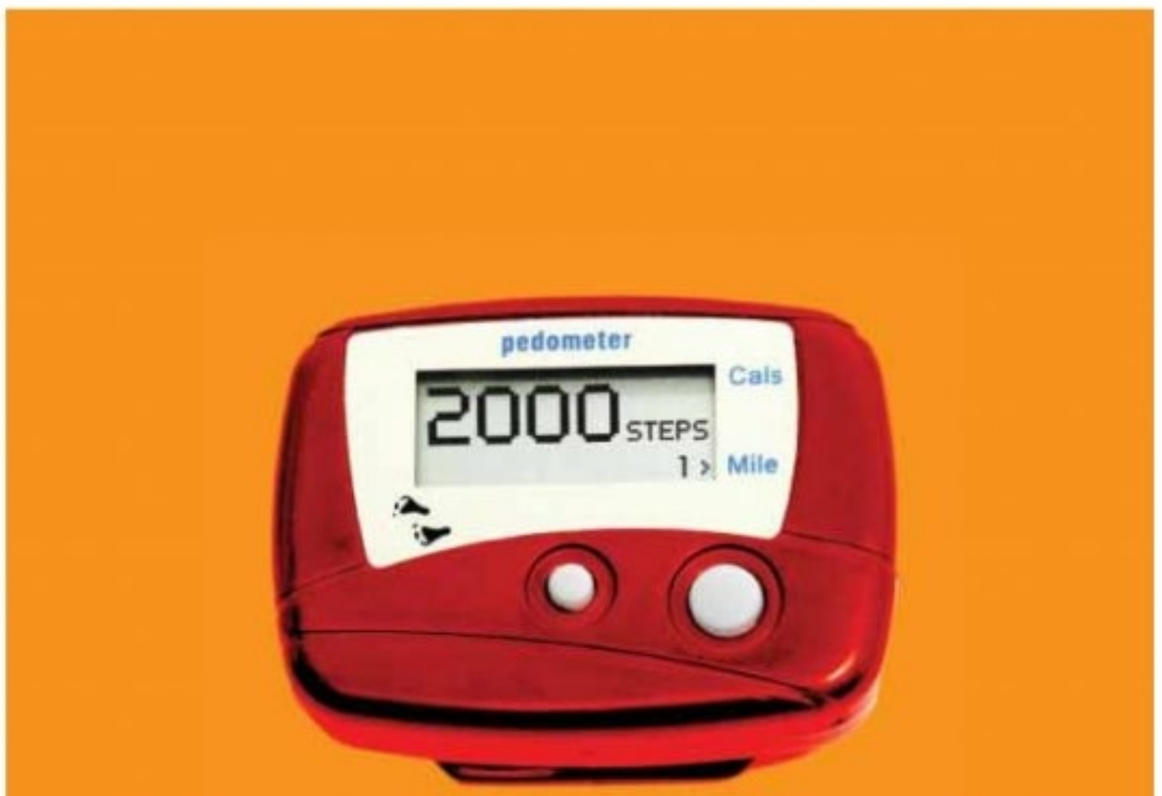

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Improvements on tap around the TD Garden

Boston residents are invited to a meeting tomorrow to hear plans for pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Causeway Street, near the TD Garden.

Reconstruction could start in 2015, but could be pushed back to 2016, according to a MassDOT spokesman.

The hearing, which will be held at the TD Garden at 7 p.m. tomorrow, is meant to fill people in, and allow MassDOT a chance to respond to questions and comments from residents.

The goal of the project is to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along the street.

According to MassDOT, the primary users of the area are pedestrians who frequently cross the street.

The roadway will be resurfaced, traffic signals upgraded and lane usage will be altered to improve traffic flow on Causeway Street.

MassDOT also plans to address street lighting, landscaping and sidewalk improvements.

The agency did not have information yesterday on the potential traffic impact for motorists.

If you go

- MassDOT public hearing, 7 p.m., at TD Garden, 100 Legends Way

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Darkness. Again

▶ Crews from NSTAR worked to repair the outage yesterday.

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI /METRO

Allston, Brighton loses power

For the second time in as many days, Allston lost power. Crews were still working yesterday to permanently restore power to the hundreds of homes and businesses that were left in the dark much of Sunday and yesterday morning. About 800 customers lost power. METRO

MBTA disappointed with number of bidders

BOSTON. State officials had hoped to attract a number of bidders for a new commuter rail contract but only two companies submitted statements of qualifications to the MBTA.

"Like our General Manager [Jonathan] Davis, I was hoping for a much bigger group of bidders for this contract," said MBTA Advisory Board Executive Director Paul Regan. "It's one of the most lucrative contracts in the country, I think."

2 The number of bidders that submitted statements of qualifications to the MBTA

The two companies vying for the contract include the current operator, Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad Company, and Keolis Commuter Services (KCS), a joint venture between Keolis Rail Services America and the French National Railway. SHNS

Woman suspected of tossing kittens out of a car

HATFIELD. A Hatfield woman is suspected of allegedly throwing kittens out of her moving car.

At around 11:20 a.m. Sunday, police responded to a 911 call that reported an "older female in a flower-patterned shirt" was throwing kittens out of a moving 2010 Dodge Avenger on Route 5 southbound in Northampton.

Police identified Judith Thornton, 54, as the suspect. However, she was not arrested or charged with a crime.

One of the kittens was found dead, police said.

An investigation into animal cruelty is ongoing. METRO

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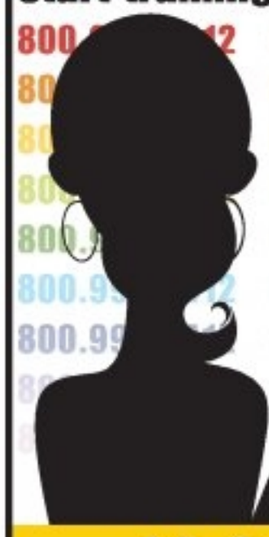

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In the news

Speaking fee for Obama aide raises questions

WASHINGTON. One of President Barack Obama's closest aides was paid $100,000 by a company doing business with Iran just before joining the White House staff, the Washington Post reported yesterday, raising awkward election-year questions for the Democrat trying to get tough with Tehran.

White House senior adviser David Plouffe received the speaking fee from Africa's biggest wireless phone operator, MTN Group, for two speeches he made in Nigeria in December 2010, the company and administration officials confirmed. **REUTERS**

Sikh temple gunman was US Army veteran linked to Nazi group

The gunman who killed six people at a Wisconsin Sikh temple was a 40-year-old U.S. Army veteran, and authorities said they were investigating possible links to white supremacist groups and his membership in a skinhead rock band.

The assailant, who was shot dead by police at the scene on Sunday, was named Wade Michael Page, a former U.S. soldier who served from 1992 to 1998, according to John Edwards, the police chief of Oak Creek, a suburb of Milwaukee.

Page killed six people and seriously wounded three, including a police officer, at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin as worshippers prepared for religious services.

The victims were five men and one woman, aged between 39 and 84. Members of the Sikh community said the president of the congregation and a priest were among the victims.

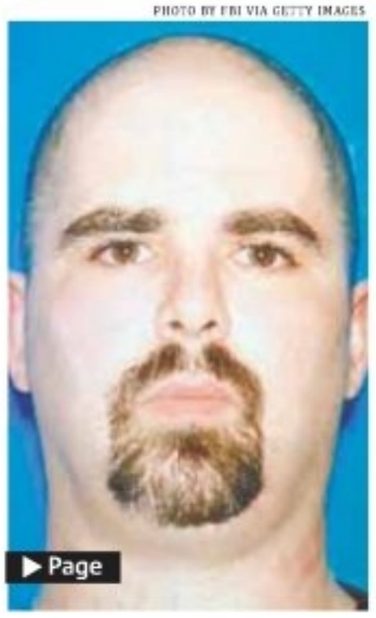
Authorities said they were treating the attack as a possible act of domestic terrorism. American Sikhs said they have often been singled out for harassment, and occasionally violent assault, since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks because they are mistaken as Muslims due to their colorful turbans and beards.

"The definition of domestic terrorism is the use of force or violence for social or political gain, so that's obviously what we're looking at," FBI special agent Teresa Carlson said at a news conference yesterday, adding that authorities were looking at Page's ties to white supremacists. **REUTERS**

Military discharge

U.S. military sources said Page had been discharged from the Army in 1998 for "patterns of misconduct" and had been cited for being drunk on duty.

PHOTO BY FBI VIA GETTY IMAGES



▶ Page

Gun was purchased legally

The 9mm semi-automatic handgun used in the attack on a Sikh temple in Wisconsin that killed six people was legally purchased from a licensed gun dealer, law enforcement officials said yesterday.

Bernard Zapor, special agent in charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, said the gun had multiple ammunition magazines, but no other details on the weapon were released.

Another ATF official, Thomas Ahern, said that the gun had been traced back to its original purchaser, but the identity of the person was not being released. The make and model of the gun also were not disclosed.

Gunman Wade Michael Page had no criminal record prior to the attack. **REUTERS**

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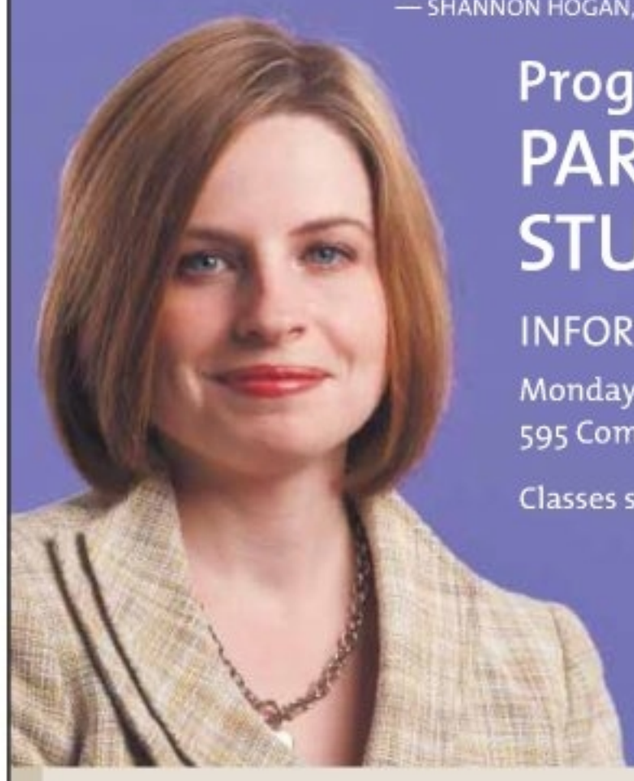
— SHANNON HOGAN, paralegal; BU certificate awarded 2011



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THE WORD

Metro's **Monica Weymouth** shares her take on the world of gossip @monicaatmetro monica.weymouth@metro.us

The feed ...

▶ Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

@ConanOBrien
This Chick-fil-A scandal has got me worried. I want to go to Arby's but I don't know where they stand on the unrest in Syria.

@wossy (Jonathan Ross)
Am playing a drinking game called Ring of Fire. With my children. I am the posemaster.

@jessicaalba
Got to get showered dressed & out the door family in tow in 20 min - GO!

@TheRealRoseanne (Roseanne Barr)
i am no longer running against 3rd party candidates! I'm RUNNING AGAINST ROMNEY AND OBAMA on behalf of the people of the USA! peace&freedom!

@AlbertBrooks
To silver and bronze medalists, contact me. I know a guy downtown that will turn those into gold

Future president Roseanne Barr

Fighting words from Elton John

We're professional gossips over here. Trash-talking, unnamed "sources," Twitter fights among grown men: It all comes with the territory, and there's not much that surprises us in this post-"Real Housewives" world. Except, of course, for Mean Girl at Large, **Elton John**.

During an interview with Australian TV host **Molly Meldrum**, Elton let loose when discussing **Madonna**.

"Why is she such a nightmare? Sorry, her career is over," he said. "Her tour has been a disaster and it couldn't happen to a bigger c—."

We feel a back-handed compliment coming on: "If Madonna had any common sense, she would have made a record like 'Ray Of Light' and stayed away from the dance stuff and just been a great pop singer ... which she does brilliantly," he continued. "But no, she had to go and prove she looks like a f—ing fairground stripper."

Now, do we agree with him? No. But we do respect his expertly conjured tornado of British crankiness and rhinestone platforms.

Elton John

No one can resist Biebs

When she's out collecting gold medals and charming the entire world, it's easy to forget that Olympic swimmer **Missy Franklin** is a mere 17 years old. (We know — we feel like blobs of shameful failure, too.)

But then **Justin Bieber** sent her a video message to congratulate her.

"I was flipping out when I saw it!" she tells Us Weekly. "His little brother was in it too, and he's the cutest little thing ever. It was insane. I was so excited. He said he was on vacation, so for him to take time out of his vacation to do that for me is so sweet and so special. I'm going to his concert soon. I can't wait!"

Bad day to lose the remote

Former "Real Housewives of New York" "stars" **Alex McCord** and **Simon Van Kempen** have decided to let reality TV solve the marital problems that reality TV contributed to. The couple, which is reportedly close to splitting, will appear on VH1's new "Couples Therapy," reports TMZ. Along with them will be "Bachelor" star **Shayne Lamas** and husband **Nik Richie** as well as 52-year-old "Lost" star **Doug Hutchison** and his 17-year-old wife, **Courtney Stodden**, whose mother was kind enough to sign her over last year.

Your move, Chick-fil-A.

ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ Courtney Stodden, 17, and Doug Hutchison, 52, are having marital problems. As in, they're married.

Bynes approaching hot-mess status

Amanda Bynes is having a bad year, even for Amanda Bynes. In April, she was arrested under suspicion of DUI, and in May she was involved in two separate hit-and-run accidents. On Sunday, she continued the streak, rear-ending a car in L.A. and then driving off without exchanging insurance information, reports TMZ.

Amanda, unless you're way more famous than we remember, you've overdrawn your child star pity fund. Pull it together, or at least get a reality show.

Talking points

Pattinson surfaces alive and well

Robert Pattinson has come out of hiding, reportedly stepping out for the night this weekend with pals at a bar near **Reese Witherspoon**'s ranch in Ojai, Calif., where he's apparently been lying low since news broke of girlfriend **Kristen Stewart**'s infidelity, according to Us Weekly. Pattinson "seemed to be having an amazing time" with a group of male friends, a patron at the Deer Lodge bar says. "He looked like a guy that was trying to enjoy himself and get away. Seems like a good kid."

Surprise: Cyrus likes her 18k ring

Miley Cyrus says her impressive vintage engagement ring was all fiance **Liam Hemsworth**'s idea. "I had no input," she tells Marie Clare. "I saw it online at one point and thought it was really pretty. I just love that it's old and has a story. And I'm happy because it doesn't look like anything else I wear." The 18-karat ring was hand-cut in the late 1800s, and it sounds like it will be the only thing on her finger for a while: "We want to have a long engagement," she says.

Royals 'absolutely dreading' kiss cam

Prince William may be used to living his life in public, but that doesn't mean he's thrilled about public displays of affection — especially when it's broadcast on a massive screen at an Olympic event. "I was absolutely dreading they were going to come and show myself and my wife, and that would have been very embarrassing," William says of the "kiss cam" at London's Velodrome.

▶ We can think of worse things, Will.

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Promotional rescue

Lady Gaga showed off a new tattoo to reveal the name of her forthcoming album yesterday. To honor her act, we look at other singers' promotional prowess.

1. When **Stevie Wonder** released "Songs in the Key of Life" in 1976, he dressed up as a cowboy. As Zeth Lundy noted in his 33⅓ book, Wonder's holsters awkwardly cradled the LP jackets as he appeared beneath a sign that read, "NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET." The album did debut at No. 1.

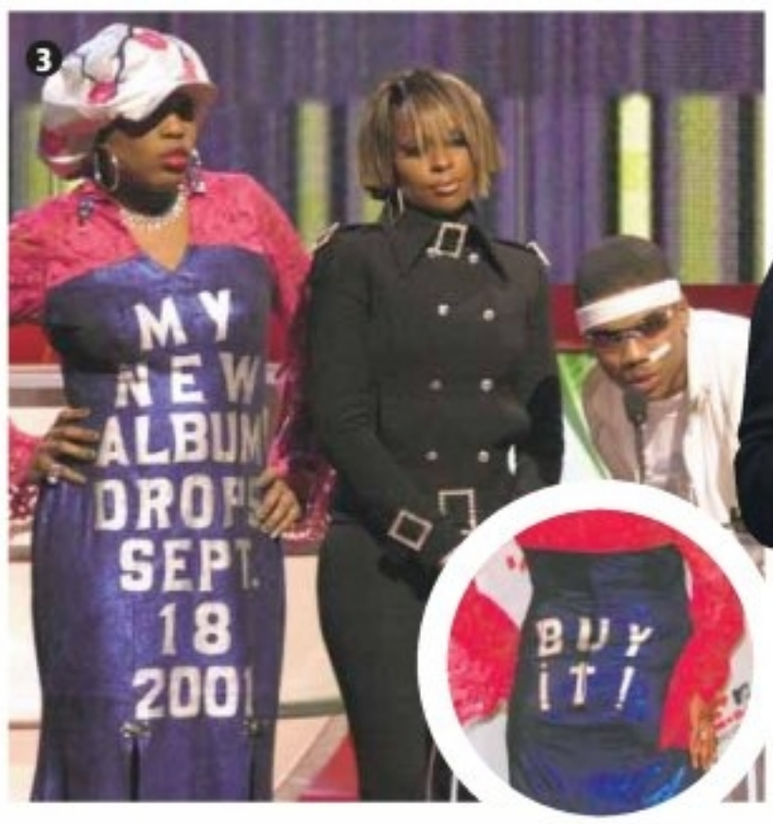
2. Only **Avril Lavigne** can pull off standing in front of a huge picture of herself that says, "The Best Damn Thing." Her 2007 album wasn't quite that, but what pride!

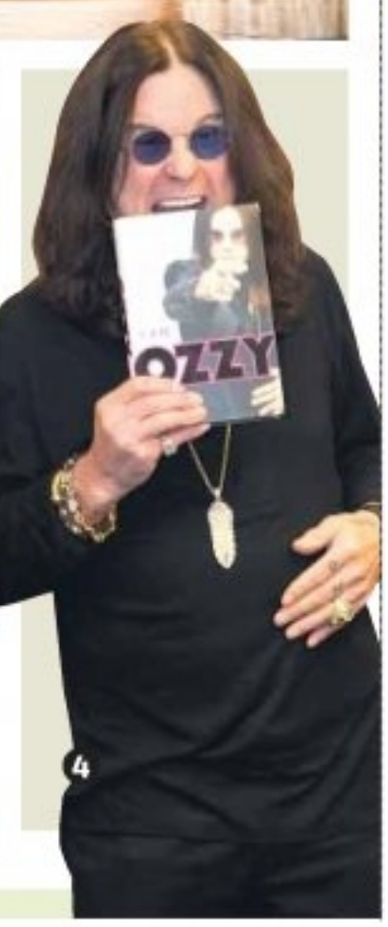
3. At the 2001 VMAs, **Macy Gray**'s dress overshadowed **Mary J. Blige**'s jacket and **Nelly**'s cheek tape. These pics were taken on Sept. 6, 2001, and something else happened between that day and the day her album came out. That something else overshadowed absolutely everything; therefore, not many people took the advice she posted on her butt.

4. In **Ozzy Osbourne**'s book, he jokes he'll only be remembered for biting off a bat's head. Maybe he's OK with that.

5. Lastly, a dishonorable mention: **Jennifer Lopez** performing at last year's American Music Awards sharing the stage with a Fiat.

1. KEVIN RAKE AND JAMES DEVANEY/WIREIMAGE
2. RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS
3. KOICHI KAMOSHIDA/GETTY IMAGES
4. JOEY FOLEY/GETTY IMAGES
5. KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES





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TV watch list

'Hard Knocks: Training Camp with the Miami Dolphins'

GETTY IMAGES

▶ Quinten Lawrence

REALITY. Winter is coming — so says this series, which celebrates the start of the NFL preseason with a five-part, behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to make the Miami Dolphins roster. **Season premiere, 10 p.m., HBO**

'Our America with Lisa Ling'

REALITY. Ling investigates the story of a man "labeled for life" as a sex offender, attempting to piece together what really happened when he was sentenced to 16 years in prison as a teenager for touching a girl's breast. **10 p.m., OWN**

'Shipping Wars'

REALITY. It's another season of movers hauling weird stuff — like a giant Willie Mays sculpture, which shipper Roy saws in half (bad idea). **Season premiere, 9 p.m., A&E** ● AMBER RAY

'Billy Elliot' is toe-tapping fun

The music may not be that memorable, but the acting, storytelling and dancing make up for that ● At nearly three hours, it could use an edit

Though it's hardly perfect musical theater, it's hard not to fall in love with "Billy Elliot The Musical."

The moving tale of a young boy discovering his dream owes most of its appeal to the production itself. The actors, artists and dancers bring so much passion and joy to their work that you can't help rooting for them to overcome their adversities just in time for a big musical happy ending. And if you stick around for the curtain call (which you should), you won't be disappointed.

But getting there is not without its challenges. At nearly three hours in length, the show could use a good edit. The dialogue is excessively chatty, and the pro-union, Thatcher-bashing talk can sometimes feels like overkill.

Even Elton John's music, while passable, isn't memorable. Lee Hall's lyrics are often indecipherable, though that may be partly due to the impeccable Pitmatic accents of the supremely talented ensemble.

KYLE FROMAN

▶ Hetherington, second from right, can tell you what it feels like when you are dancing.

Thankfully, the show's shortcomings are almost completely overshadowed by incredible dancing, stellar performances and heartwarming storytelling.

After the rousing ensemble number "Solidarity," Billy and his colorful friend Michael (Kylend Hetherington and Cameron Clifford, respectively, at this performance) deliver the show's most enjoyable song-and-dance sequence, "Expressing Yourself," as the duo comes of age. It's a nearly show-stealing turn by Clifford.

But the deafening cheers are reserved for the impassioned number "Electricity," when Hetherington issues Billy's response to the question: "What does it feel like when you are dancing?"

NICK DUSSAULT
nick.dussault@metro.us

The plot:

As Margaret Thatcher continues to wreak havoc on the lives of striking coalminers, 11-year-old Billy Elliot accidentally discovers ballet. Though his passion is quickly squelched by his widowed, striking father and abrasive older brother, his teacher perseveres because she knows he's got a gift.

If you go

'Billy Elliot The Musical'
Through Aug. 19
Boston Opera House
539 Washington St., Boston
$33-$127, 617-259-3400
www.broadwayinboston.com

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A pinker shade of crimson

26-year-old Rebecca Harrington's debut novel, 'Penelope,' follows a feckless freshman through her first year at Harvard

Rebecca Harrington's debut novel, like its heroine, shouldn't be judged by its girlish cover. Dotted with classical literature in-jokes, "Penelope" is a clever read about the absurdity of the Ivy League experience: the hookups, the all-night "pregaming" and the waffle irons branding the college crest on students' breakfasts.

Based on Harrington's own experience at Harvard, the book also touches on the isolation often felt by college freshmen. Penelope O'Shaunessy arrives on campus a blank slate: She has no friends, and she hasn't reviewed her all-important freshman orientation packet. She spends the first few weeks eating alone, watching detective movies on her laptop and sniffling through allergy attacks brought on by her roommate's feral cat. This puts her, of course, in stark contrast to her ultramotivated peers.

"I wanted to have her be there as a counterpoint to everybody else," Harrington tells us. "I was using a lot of English campus novels as models, where the hero is usually male and they usually never explain how he got to Oxford or Cambridge, and he doesn't seem particularly motivated."

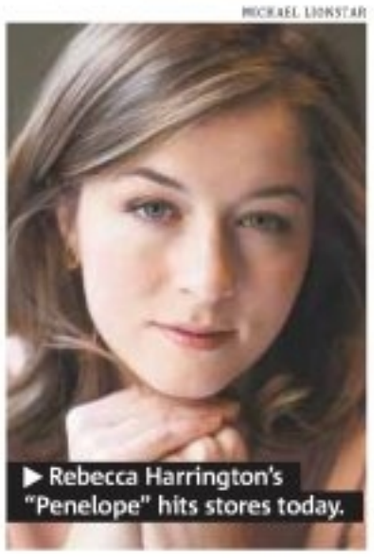
But while Penelope falls prey to the usual drinking- and dating-related college mishaps, she never abandons her dorky core in favor of Harvard manners. As in the classic campus novels Harrington references, virtue is rewarded and the villains get their comeuppance.

While "Penelope" is ideal for the class of 2016, it will also resonate with those navigating life after graduation. "I think feeling left out of things is incredibly universal," Harrington says. "It's more about that than Harvard specifically."

"But," she says, laughing, "I do think it's a good primer if, let's say, you're sort of a nerd."

Harrington is now the college editor at the Huffington Post — another institution itching for parody. Will it inspire her next book? "No," she says. "The thing about Harvard is that there are so many absurd elements to it. It was rife for satire."

MICHAEL LIONSTAR



▶ Rebecca Harrington's "Penelope" hits stores today.

"I do think it's a good primer if, let's say, you're sort of a nerd." REBECCA HARRINGTON

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rebecca.finkel@metro.us

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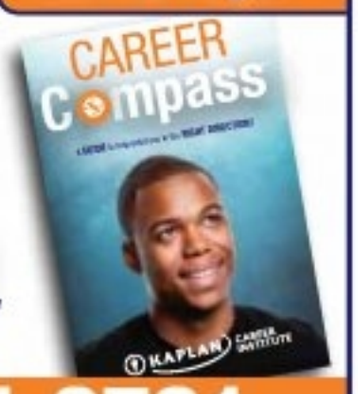

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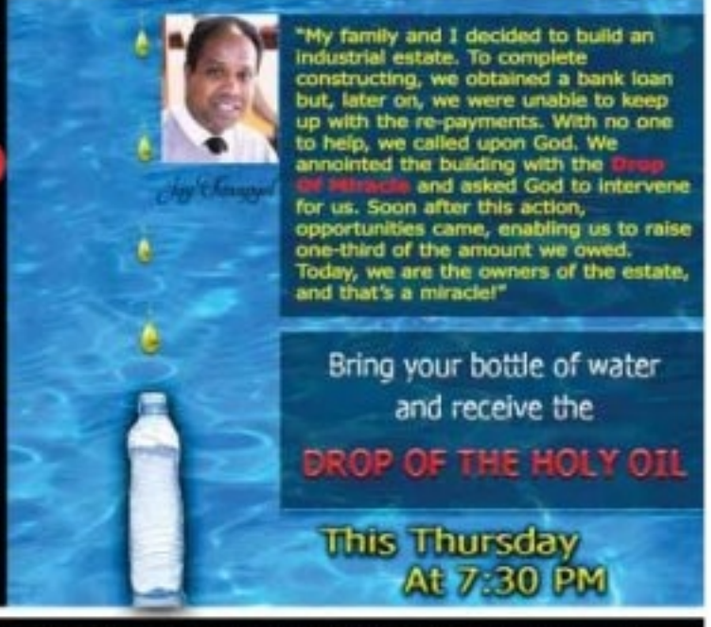

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These sporty pants from Lululemon's new girls line, ivivva, will keep her moving. Sky's the Limit Crop, $56, www.ivivva.com

Lose the earbuds: These boast form and function. iHome fashion striped headphones, $30, www.ihomeaudio.com

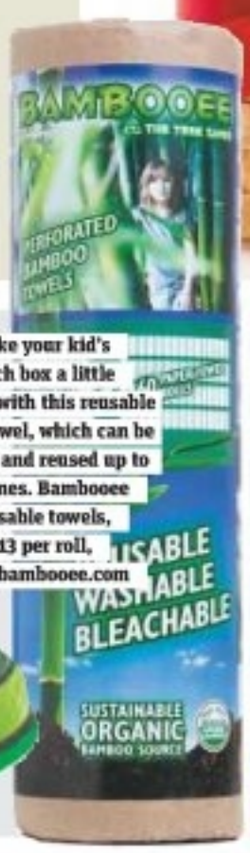
Your budding style star will be a trendsetter in these. Jordache red skinny jean, $16, www.walmart.com

This is sure to keep the bullies away. Mojo lion backpack, $48, www.mojobackpacks.com

Your little man will be the coolest kid in school wearing this. Boys blue plaid button-down, $17, www.marshallsonline.com for store locations

Because the teacher's already tired of regular apples. Edward Marc Chocolate white chocolate apple bushel, $6 for two apples, www.edwardmarc.com

Lightweight kicks that are perfect for gym class — or just scrambling to get out the door in the morning. Kids PureFlow neon sneakers, $65, www.brooksrunning.com



Make your kid's lunch box a little greener with this reusable paper towel, which can be washed and reused up to 50 times. Bambooee reusable towels, $13 per roll, www.bambooee.com

Warning: These adorable school supplies may lead to groupies as cool as Gwen Stefani. Harajuku Mini school supplies, under $5, www.target.com

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Letters

letters@metro.us

Olympians bear torch of hope

Kudos to all of the Olympians who partook in the 2012 Olympics in London. Their talent, hard work, perseverance, endless practices, sacrifices, overcoming adversity in many situations and intense focus on their goals led them to the games of what they do best. Nationality, religion and race were respected by all. The display of team sportsmanship exemplified togetherness. These young Olympians have realized their aspirations to become wonderful role models to our youth. In this time of turmoil among nations and difficult economic times in countries, the Olympics have given us pleasure, pride and hope. Wouldn't it be spectacular if all nations could learn a lesson from the Olympics and bond together as a united team of one?

ROBERTA MILLER, BROOKLINE, MASS.

NASA lands both rover and applause

Living in the digital age has been very rewarding, to say the least. Digital phones are mini computers, social media keeps everyone interconnected and, of course, the Internet has all of the information you'd ever need at your fingertips. With the future being now, it's hard to look to the past. But NASA just gave us reason to! Landing a nuclear-powered probe the size of a car on another planet is a phenomenal display of human ingenuity and makes me proud to be American. These are the feats worthy of national boast and pride.

RICH BRITTLE, BOSTON

No reason for Mitt not to reveal taxes

Everyone who is considering whether to cast their vote for Mr. Romney has a right to know if he is a finagler. The only way to assure these potential voters that he is not is to make available his tax returns for the years 2001 through 2011. When I applied for an appointment as tax examiner with the IRS, three years of my tax returns were audited. What's the problem? I know his dad would agree.

ROBERT A KEHL, VIA E-MAIL

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

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Romney just doing his job — well

Your readers are all over the GOP candidate about his job record as CEO. His job as CEO is to make the company profitable, not to hand out meaningless jobs. Obviously, the companies did well and made profits. On the other hand, Obama's job WAS to create jobs — an obvious failure.

MARTY GROSSMAN, VIA E-MAIL

Stuffing your beak an interesting way to protest

Oh, you're a Christian and you're tired of something (like a belief system you think is corrupt) getting shoved down your throat? You're opposed to violence, but you financially support the death penalty for simply being a member of a nonviolent group? Imagine your hypocrisy, and our chagrined amusement, that you protest ... by shoving a violently murdered bird down your throat.

CHARLES BOSSE, VIA E-MAIL

Horoscope

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** If you have to contend with an individual who is unyielding and stubborn, attempting to convert him or her to your way of doing things could turn out to be an exercise in futility. Let it go.

♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Don't assume any new financial obligations, especially if you are already straining to take care of some old debts. One more straw could break the camel's back.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** Before accusing your mate or anyone else of dragging his or her feet, make sure you're doing everything that is required of you.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Should you find yourself being asked to perform a task or assignment that you find distasteful, rather than make a fuss over it, do what is requested with a smile.

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Do what you can to steer clear of a controversial situation that involves two of your friends. Your well-meaning input could complicate matters rather than help resolve them.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** Disagreements with family need to be kept private. Instead of acquiring support, airing your disputes in public merely makes everyone look bad in the eyes of others.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** You should strive to be supportive of associates who express their ideas and/or plans. If you feel compelled to comment, make sure that what you say is constructive, not critical.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** Before taking on any long-term obligation at this point in time, review the possibilities from all angles. If you are impulsive about it, you could create difficulties that would last a while.

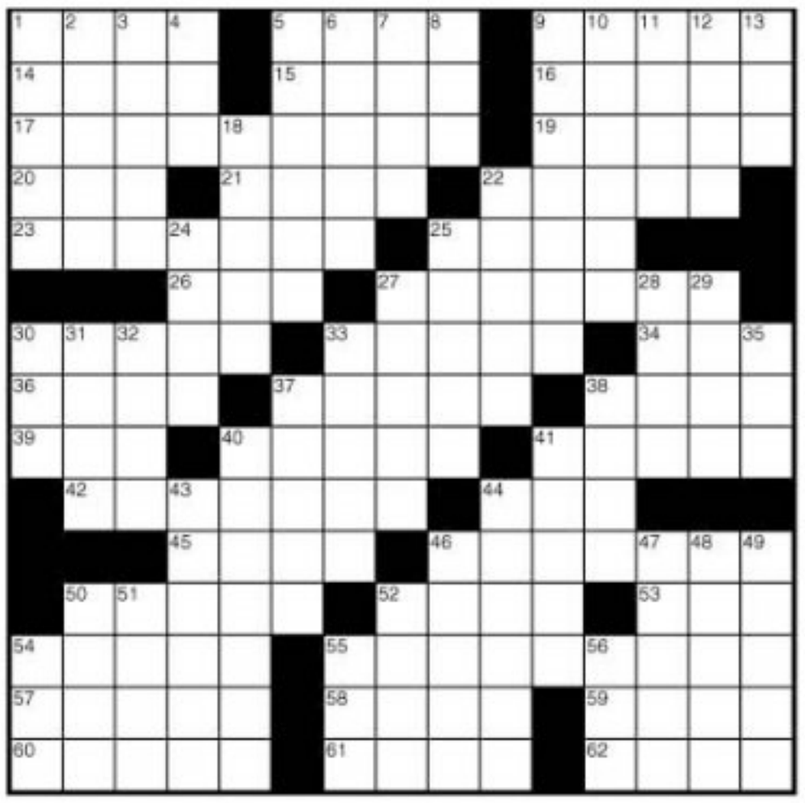
♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** If you find yourself stymied by a lack of support, be both patient and persevering. There isn't anyone who can't be won over.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** Don't expect your colleagues to do things for you that you could easily do for yourself. Whether they're friends or co-workers, others will resent being manipulated.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** It might provide you with temporary pleasure to put frivolous interests ahead of duties, but it won't equal the guilt you'll feel and/or blame you'll collect on account of not doing your job.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** There won't be any free rides. Only hard work and persistence will help you achieve goals worthy of the effort.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL



Across
1 "I Walk the Line" singer
5 Vex
9 Cholla and nopal
14 Orchestra member
15 Stadium shape
16 Wildlife staple
17 "The Sheik"
19 Installed ceramic
20 Planck space telescope launcher
21 Flamenco shouts
22 Tea container
23 Positions of power
25 "__ Ha'i"
26 Clark or Orbison
27 Erstwhile reading aid
30 Grease jobs
33 Inspecting
34 And, to Wolfgang
36 Geologic divisions
37 Like John Wayne
38 "Catch-22" actor
39 Genre
40 Istanbul moolah
41 Pulverize
42 Highest heaven
44 Mediocre grade
45 Snowfall measure
46 Throb
50 Jazz Count
52 Tighten a corset
53 Hoisting apparatus
54 Exclusive bunch
55 Risky investments (2 wds.)
57 Where Khartoum is
58 Ship of myth
59 Admirer
60 Summit
61 "Eso __"
62 Key or cay

Down
1 Want for oneself
2 Disconcert
3 Type of eclipse
4 Part of a giggle
5 Fool's attire
6 Dorm climbers
7 Groupies
8 "Alice" waitress
9 Product book
10 Low-pH
11 Like the South Pole
12 Playing card
13 Gary's st.
18 Banned things (hyph.)
22 Shrewd
24 Blast-furnace inputs
25 Simmers
27 Talking bird
28 Humdinger
29 Finales
30 Aloha token
31 WWW addresses
32 Swelter
33 One-moon planet
35 Dit partner
37 Chop fine
38 Mars, to Plato
40 Easygoing
41 Glitterati member
43 Panoramic views
44 Type of clock
46 Regretful feelings
47 "The Eve of St. __"
48 Type of wave
49 Happen next
50 Fog up
51 Nurse's helper
52 Fisherman's fly
54 PC key
55 Elbow
56 Kimono tie

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SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

					9	2	6	
	4	9	6	3	8			
1			7	2				
3	1							7
		6				1		
7							3	9
				4	1			6
			3	5	7	9	8	
	7	1	8					

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS: **WWW.METRO.US/PUZZLES**

Solution to Monday's crossword

■	J	A	Y	■	T	B	A	R	■	S	M	A	S	H
S	A	G	A	■	E	R	G	O	■	C	I	S	C	O
O	V	E	N	■	X	R	A	Y	V	I	S	I	O	N
B	A	S	K	E	T	■	R	A	E	■	S	A	T	E
■	■	■	E	D	U	C	■	L	E	A	P	■	■	■
C	A	L	D	E	R	A	S	■	P	R	E	F	A	B
A	L	E	■	R	E	P	O	T	■	C	A	R	G	O
N	A	G	S	■	D	R	U	I	D	■	K	A	R	O
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E	S	T	A	T	E	■	H	E	A	V	Y	S	E	T
■	■	■	R	O	A	R	■	S	M	E	E	■	■	■
S	E	A	L	■	C	H	E	■	A	R	A	B	I	A
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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR/GETTY IMAGES

The country's best roadside attractions

Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis.

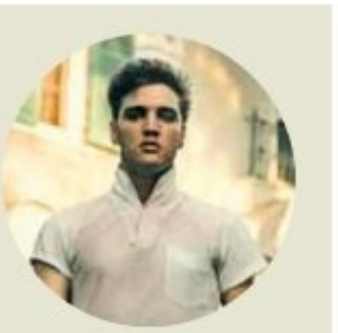
Why we like it: When the atmosphere inside the car starts to feel like a circus, the outdoor extravaganza of acrobats, aerialists, magic tricks and animal performances that is Circus World Museum puts it in perspective. Located on the winter grounds of the original Ringling Bros. Circus, the attraction features 10 performances daily, rain or shine, through Sept. 3, so you're almost guaranteed to catch a show.

Where to eat: Forgo cotton candy and hamburgers onsite and head for the cheerful Little Village Cafe. This cozy, memorabilia-packed spot features a menu full of healthy options, from blackened salmon Caesar salad to angel hair pasta tossed with fresh veggies.

McDonald's No. 1 Store Museum, Des Plaines, Ill.

Why we like it: Since no road trip is complete without the greasy goodness of fast food, a visit to the first location of the McDonald's franchise will stir not only nostalgia but stomach rumblings. Vintage golden arches, complete with an unimaginable 15-cent sign, soar over the building, which follows the original blueprints (there were only drive-throughs back then). The replica restaurant/museum keeps irregular hours during the summer. Try to arrange a tour, or just peek through the windows at the eerie mannequin employees wearing original uniforms from 1955.

Where to eat: The location serves only as a museum/attraction, but once your taste buds are primed for a Big Mac, head across the street to (where else?) McDonald's.



Graceland, Memphis, Tenn.

Why we like it: A pilgrimage to Graceland, the home of music legend Elvis Presley, the King of Rock 'n' Roll, is just the remedy when the whole family is feeling all shook up from too much time in the car. Presley's 14-acre estate is now a museum, with several tour options through his home, including the famous Jungle Room. Don't have time for a full tour? Check out the Meditation Garden, where Elvis is laid to rest. It's the only part of the estate that doesn't require a ticket.

Where to eat: Memphis isn't just famous as an epicenter of all things Elvis: Its barbecue has just as many fans. Dig into some of the city's best at The Bar-B-Q Shop, a no-frills joint that serves up heaps of both wet and dry versions.

Wall Drug Store, Wall, S.D.

Why we like it: After three-quarters of a century, coffee at the iconic Wall Drug Store, also known as Wall Drug, still costs a nickel, ice water (the original lure for travelers to stop here) is still free and the tourists are still stopping. But the place has exploded in size and scope, with a 76,000-square-foot building filled with art and Western tchotchkes galore that pulls in millions of visitors every year.

Where to eat: This is meat-and-potatoes country, and you can't go wrong with a juicy steak at most of the family-friendly establishments in and around Wall. Try Red Rock Restaurant (no official website), which has consistently good food (though sometimes slow service).

CONTRIBUTED BY Fodor's

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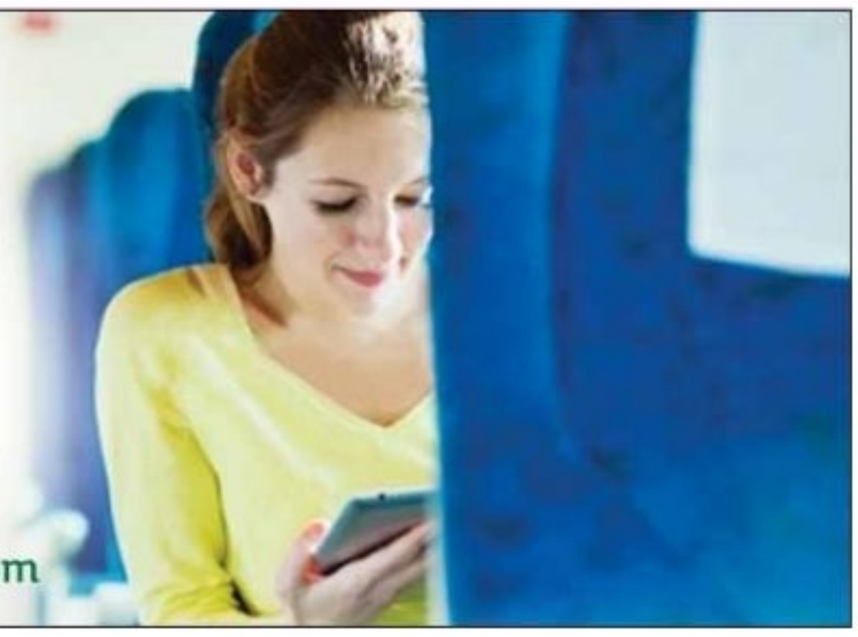

Into the wild, amenities included

Fine dining and relaxing pair well with an eyeful of Alaskan landscape

Get around by train, boat or plane

It's not often that you set down your fork to watch a whale arch out of the water at sunset. Unless you're on a cruise in Alaska, in which case the postcard-worthy moment is just part of the decor. There is a lot of wild and astounding beauty in Alaska — crystalline blue glaciers, snowy mountains skirted in lush greenery — and it's a lot easier to see it surrounded by the creature comforts of a cruise ship.

It's no mistake that cruising is a common way for travelers to visit Alaska. Ships like Royal Caribbean's newly renovated Rhapsody of the Seas have the kinds of amenities that can adapt to a wide array of travelers. Newly refurbished rooms mean that cabin time is truly relaxing (room service is no extra charge) — and for those who prefer to kick back with a cocktail, the retro-inspired R-bar makes first-rate mixology a priority.

JULIA FURLAN
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TIM PATATO

▶ Glacier ice is a shocking blue, a beautiful backdrop to breakfast on the deck of the ship.

YOLO daytrips

Excursions can seem like a pricey addition to a cruise vacation, but they are the easiest way to fit a few more spectacular vistas into a trip. In Juneau, the sea plane trip to the Taku Lodge takes passengers over ice fields that are raked with pools of fluorescent blue ice. At the lodge, signs warn against bears who, like the humans, are drawn to the open-fire grills of fresh-caught Alaskan salmon.

Further north in Skagway, the town's few streets are set at the foot of mountains that catch the morning sunlight like the Paramount logo (minus the circle of stars). The steam railroad trips that spiral down the mountains have breathtaking views of the area's mountains that go from solid snow at the top, passing by waterfalls until arriving at the lush green that surrounds Skagway.

All-inclusive is very inclusive

Possibly the best thing about floating around a beautiful place on a ship the size of an apartment building (the Rhapsody is considered small with nearly 2,000 passengers) is the versatility that's available for each traveler to choose his or her own trip. Families with small children can make use of day care to see sights while the tots are entertained. And travelers of all ages (and all skill levels) can access rugged Alaskan nature unburdened by luggage. Food ranging from cafe-style paninis to pad thai is available, too, so picky eaters will not go hungry.

The things you can see in Alaska you can't see anywhere else. So you might as well get comfortable while you're seeing it, because it might be a while before you see it again.

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3

Tune in

Three events to catch today:

- Usain Bolt takes to the track again in Round 1 of 200m qualifying. As great as Bolt is at the 100m, he may be even better at the longer distance. He holds the world record there as well and will be matched up with Jamaican Yohan Blake again.
- Lolo Jones might get a shot at redemption in the 100-meter hurdles after falling on the ninth hurdle in Beijing while leading. First she has to get through semis, which is not a given. Aussie Sally Pearson is the favorite. The final is at 4 p.m.
- The semifinals in women's beach volleyball are tomorrow afternoon at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. and both American teams are alive. You know Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh-Jennings, but April Ross and Jen Kessy also remain. Both U.S. teams are actually underdogs.

MARK OSBORNE

STANLEY CHOU/GETTY IMAGES

Extra EXTRA!

US women advance to gold medal match with win in second extra period
Morgan scores game-winner in 123rd minute Will face Japan in final

No one said a chance for revenge would come easy.

Hours after Japan clinched a spot in the gold medal final, the U.S. battled Canada to a 4-3 victory in injury time of the second period of extra time to advance to a rematch with the same team that upset them in penalty kicks in last summer's World Cup.

Media darling Alex Morgan headed in the game-winner on a cross from Heather O'Reilly in the 123rd minute. Pandemonium followed as the final whistle blew just seconds later.

But the match itself was anything but pretty for the United States. Veteran Canadian forward Christine Sinclair punished the U.S. defense all evening — netting all three of her country's goals in the 22nd minute, 67th minute and 73rd minute. Each one appeared more devastating than the last, but the U.S. battled back each time. Megan Rapinoe scored twice, while Abby Wambach's equalizer in the 80th minute eventually forced extra time.

MARK OSBORNE
mark.osborne@metro.us

The games in pictures

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

1 Gold medalist **Aliya Mustafina** of Russia keeps her eye on the bar.

2 **Kobe Bryant** attempts an interesting shot as he lands on the back of Argentina's Leonardo Gutierrez during a U.S. victory.

3 **Kirani James** won Grenada's first-ever medal by taking gold in the 400m.

4 American **Jennifer Suhr** shocked two-time gold medalist Elena Isinbaeva for gold in pole vault.

5 **Tom Slingsby** of Australia won gold in the men's sailing laser radial class. It was just the second gold for Australia.

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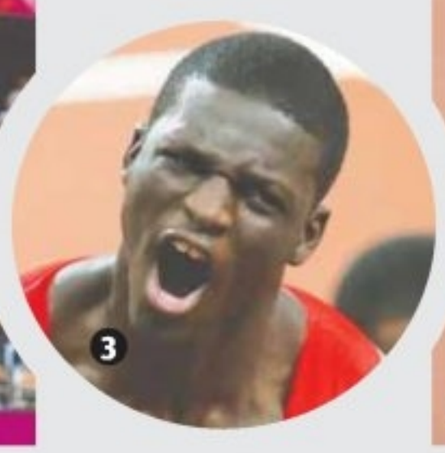
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Douglas

Douglas botches bar routine

American gymnast and individual all-around champion Gabby Douglas couldn't add to her medal haul yesterday as she flubbed her routine on uneven bars.

Douglas came down on the wrong side of the top bar while in a handstand and had to improvise to get back on track. It wasn't smooth enough, as she finished in eighth.

The breakout star of the Olympics will have one more shot at gold today as she competes in the balance beam event final. It is the last day of gymnastics and possibly the last time any of these members will compete in an Olympics. METRO/MO

Medal count

	G	S	B
1. CHINA	31	19	14
2. UNITED STATES	29	15	19
3. RUSSIA	7	17	18
4. GREAT BRITAIN	18	11	11
5. JAPAN	2	12	14
6. FRANCE	8	9	9
7. SOUTH KOREA	11	5	6
8. GERMANY	5	10	7
9. AUSTRALIA	2	12	8

5

10. ITALY	7	6	4

On the offensive

Loaded offense poised to once again be AFC's best ◗ But there are still positions to be won ◗ A look at the top preseason battles for the Patriots

GETTY IMAGES

▶ LSU product and second-year pro Stevan Ridley will look to get the brunt of the Patriots carries this season.

The top camp battles to watch on the offensive side of the ball:

Quarterback
No, it's not a Mark Sanchez/Tim Tebow battle (thankfully), but the Patriots do seem to have a real second-string quarterback battle on their hands between four-year backup Brian Hoyer and second-year third stringer Ryan Mallett. Preseason football is just the place to determine where each are in their respective careers. Hoyer obviously has more experience in the system and trust with Bill Belichick, but Mallett probably has more upside in the long run. Look for Hoyer to win this battle, but Mallett won't be a third-stringer for much longer.

Running back
BenJarvus Green-Ellis is now in Cincinnati, and that leaves the Patriots with a couple of second-year backs hoping to lead the way. It appeared to be Steven Ridley's job to lose after the first week, but fellow second-year back Shane Vereen has turned things on after a slow start to camp. Ridley was shown the bench for good after fumbling in the first postseason game against the Broncos last year, so you can imagine Belichick won't think twice to do it again if he shows another case of "fumble-itis." That said, Ridley should be in there to start games, with Vereen and Danny Woodhead helping out. Rookie free agent Brandon Bolden has also impressed in camp, and with Joseph Addai out of the picture, he could snag the fourth running back spot.

Wide receiver
The Patriots brought on a number of new receivers to add to Tom Brady's arsenal, and they are familiar names. Jabar Gaffney and Donte' Stallworth were part of the historic 2007 team, and newcomer Brandon Lloyd looks to be Brady's No. 1 deep threat option. Lloyd and Gaffney should line up on opposite sides, with Wes Welker starting in the slot. Julien Edelman and Matthew Slater have proven too versatile (special teams, defense) to be cut, so if the Pats go with six roster spots at WR, it'll come down to Stallworth and Deion Branch. Pats fans know what Branch can do, but it was apparent last season that he lost a step.

JIMMY TOSCANO
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Going nowhere

Tom Brady turned 35 this week, but reiterated that he intends on playing up to or past his 40th birthday.

- **Vinny Testaverde and Doug Flutie** both backed up Brady when they were in their early 40s.
- **Brady** told reporters: "I'm a long ways from 42. Hopefully I'm still talking to you guys when I'm 42."
- **Decade of brilliance** Brady has had one of the most successful 10-year runs of any quarterback in NFL history since the 2001 season.

Quoted

"With the group of (QBs) we have here, the competition that we have I think brings the best out of all of us, really."
PATRIOTS BACKUP QUARTERBACK BRIAN HOYER

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Gold or bust

GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. men's basketball team knew it would be in for a stiff test against Argentina yesterday, and that proved to be true for two quarters, but the Americans used a 42-point third quarter to coast, 126-97.

- **Kevin Durant** was spectacular for the U.S. as he poured in 28 points while hitting eight 3-pointers.
- **Kobe Bryant, Chris Paul, Andre Iguodala, LeBron James and Kevin Love** each scored in double figures.
- **Andres Nocioni** and **Luis Scola** got vocal with the U.S. bench late in the game.
- **The U.S.** next plays Australia Wednesday at 11:15 a.m. in the quarterfinals.

DILIP VISHWANAT/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Aly Raisman has two shots for a medal today.

Eyes to the floor

Needham's Raisman looking to medal in floor, beam today Likely last chance ever at individual gold

Aly Raisman will be 22 years old in late July of 2016.

For any other athlete in any other sport, that age coincides with being overwhelmingly green and the word "potential" is typically assigned. In gymnastics, however, 22 is ancient. It's the equivalent of a quarterback excelling at age 40.

With that said, today could be it for Aly Raisman as far as Olympic medals are concerned. There are no holdovers on this year's team from the 2008 Olympics, and the last time U.S. female gymnasts participated in back-to-back games occurred in 2000 when Dominique Dawes and Amy Chow accomplished the feat after getting their initial exposure at the 1996 games in Atlanta.

Raisman has a team gold but is seeking that individual medal that would place her among the greats in United States' gymnastics history.

16 The current U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team has an average age of 16.4, and Aly Raisman is the oldest member at 18.

Raisman is favored by many pundits to grab gold in today's floor exercise (11:23 a.m.) after finishing first in the qualifier.

Jordyn Wieber will also be competing in the floor final. Raisman's other shot at a medal will happen earlier in the day in the beam final (9:47 a.m.).

NBC will air both events on tape delay beginning at 8 p.m.

MATT BURKE
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